STRANGE INTERLUDE

STORY OF THE FILM
From the Play by Eugene O'Neill
PRICE TWENTY-FIVE CENTS

LIFE STORIES OF ✪ NORMA SHEARER
CLARK GABLE

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2026 with funding from
anonymous donation in memory of Carolyn Hauer

https://archive.org/details/souv-stranger-interlude

THE STORY OF THE FILM

STRANGE INTERLUDE

LIFE STORIES OF...

NORMA SHEARER

CLARK GABLE . . .

PUBLISHED BY...
CINEMA CLASSICS
380 Second Avenue, New York
BOOK 1 OF THE SERIES

NORMA SHEARER

● Star of "Strange Interlude," as Nina Leeds, the amazing heroine of the movie based on Eugene O'Neill's masterpiece. This is considered Norma's greatest role

STRANGE INTERLUDE

• CAST •

CHARACTER	NAME
NINA LEEDS	NORMA SHEARER
NED DARRELL	CLARK GABLE
SAM EVANS	ALEXANDER KIRKLAND
CHARLIE MARSDEN	RALPH MORGAN
GORDON as a young man	ROBERT YOUNG
MRS. EVANS	MAY ROBSON
MADELINE	MAUREEN O'SULLIVAN
PROFESSOR LEEDS	HENRY B. WALTHALL
MAID	MARY ALDEN
GORDON as a child	TAD ALEXANDER

DIRECTOR: ROBERT Z. LEONARD

AUTHOR: (Play) EUGENE O'NEILL

DIALOGUE CONTINUITY BY: BESS MEREDYTH and C. GARDINER SULLIVAN

PHOTOGRAPHED BY: LEE GARMES

FILM EDITOR: MARGARET BOOTH

HISTORY:

The play, "Strange Interlude", by Eugene O'Neill, was produced by The Theatre Guild. It opened at the John Golden Theatre, New York, January 30, 1928, and closed June 15, 1929. Lynn Fontanne, Tom Powers, Glenn Anders and Earle Larrimore were in the original cast. "Strange Interlude" received the Pulitzer Prize play award for 1928-29.

THE PICTURE "STRANGE INTERLUDE" IS

Copyright by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Corporation, 1932. Play "Strange Interlude" copyright by Eugene O'Neill, 1927. Picture "Strange Interlude" copyright by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Distributing Corporation, 1932.

ALEXANDER KIRKLAND AND NORMA SHEARER

● "Strange Interlude" is essentially a great romance. It is the story of a woman who takes love where she finds it, and of the men in her life—the husband, the friend, the lover. Alexander Kirkland plays Sam Evans, the man Nina marries. Kirkland is one of the most promising young actors in Hollywood. He was born in Mexico City and comes from the stage. He is under contract to Fox, by whom he was loaned for "Strange Interlude". His hobby is painting seascapes and pretty girls

CLARK GABLE: POLO PLAYER

● In "Strange Interlude" Clark Gable appears in the most daring role of his career. For the past year Clark Gable has been the greatest box office sensation that ever shot up to stardom. He has taken fame with a grin and a shrug. He prefers he-man diversions, hunting and horse-back riding to being the idol of the nation

MEMORIES OF GORDON

● Nina Leeds brooded over the death of the man she had loved. She hated her father for having kept her from marrying him. Now Gordon was lying dead in a battlefield in France

STRANGE INTERLUDE

STORY OF THE FILM BY JAMES WALLACE

There was always an accent of tragedy about Nina Leeds' loves. That began when she was twenty, when a shell tore through Gordon Shaw's body on a battlefield of France, killing him. His death killed many things in Nina, her love for her school-teaching father, among others. He had kept Gordon from marrying her before leaving and Gordon's own honor had kept him from taking her without marriage. She hated both men for cheating her in that way.

She longed to sacrifice herself for love. Which is hardly the way for a beautiful young girl to feel but Nina Leeds wasn't a simple person. She lived in warfare with herself, her thoughts always at variance with her actions and the laws of society. She was a natural rebel which was what caused her to revolt completely when fussy Charlie Marston returned from Europe and began adoring her again.

Charlie had wheeled her in her baby carriage and worshipped her even then. Nina had for him the affection she might have given a faithful dog. But the knowledge that Charlie and her father were discussing her, being constantly shocked at her frank vitality and passion, forced her to action. She left home, defiantly, and went up to Boston to the soldiers' hospital where she had started a nursing career during the war. She hoped to escape her father and Charlie forever. She did things at the hospital and learned things that those two well-bred gentlemen had never heard of. Necking would have been a mild word for her escapades. Nina believed she was through with all gentle emotions until a year later a telegram came from Charlie advising her that her father was dangerously ill and that she had better return home. Then she journeyed back grimly, bringing Dr. Ned Darrell and Sam Evans, the newest of her worshippers, with her.

She hoped that Ned, the cool, intelligent detached Ned might be able to do something for her father, but the moment she saw Charlie's face, she knew death had beaten her once more.

She went upstairs to pray beside the still form of the

Nina decided to leave home and become a nurse, but her father and Charlie pleaded with her not to do so

"So—my father's dead?" Nina said. "He's gone and I can't even feel a thing. When Gordon died, everything died in me"

old professor, leaving the three men alone, careless of how they might get along.

It was Charlie who sensed that they were all rivals for Nina's affections. Sam blundered into it at once.

"I suppose I—I might as well tell you, Mr. Marsden, because Nina will probably tell you herself—she says you're such an old friend of hers. I've asked Nina to marry me. She only smiled but that doesn't mean I'm going to give up. I'm going to keep after her until she marries me if it's only to get rid of me."

Ned Darrell spoke. "That's the idea, Sam. It would be the best thing in the world for Nina. Run and get this prescription filled for her, will you? She's got to get some sleep tonight." He scoffed at Sam's

"Nina is hysterical. Get this prescription filled for her and come back as soon as you can," Ned ordered Sam

Nina and Sam were glowingly happy during their honeymoon in the spring. They were lovers, companions, everything to each other

worried look. "Nina will be all right—as soon as she can break through and cry a little."

Sam rushed away. Charlie tried to feel superior to Ned Darrell. He couldn't succeed very well. He was too jealous. Darrell was so plainly one of those men of powerful interest to women. He hated the type. He tried being sarcastic. "I'm interested to know why you think it would be such a good thing for Nina to marry this young Evans," he murmured scornfully.

His tone didn't disturb Ned. The doctor had his own plans in which he intended to use Charlie to help him. He said, "Sam is in love with Nina and it's one of those unselfish loves you read about." He noted Charlie's snobbish expression. He thought of the

Nina and Sam had moved to a bungalow by the sea during the first year of their marriage

Sam's mother dragged the trembling girl upstairs through a hidden doorway. "You can't leave Sam," she told her. "He'd go mad. I'll show you what would happen. It's a family secret and now you're one of the family you must know"

things he could tell that ladylike soul about Nina and was cynically amused. "I'm not acquainted with Sam's social qualifications, if that's what's worrying you. They're simple, healthy country folks—I'm sure of that —although I've never met them. Sam's just the sort of character Nina could shape, whose life she could guide. I've told her that a dozen times. It would be her salvation."

Charlie bridled. "Do you know what I'm inclined to suspect, Doctor? That you're in love with Nina yourself."

Ned Darrell was not so easily trapped. "Oh, really," he said and let it go at that. He could have explained that he had no intention of loving any woman, of letting sex interfere with his career.

Nina's re-entering the room stopped their discussion. She was bewildered and lost, not the hard young modern, but like a little child. "He's gone," she said to Charlie, "my father who began me. I've been sitting up there trying to pray but I couldn't. Life is just one long drawn out lie with a sniffing sigh at the end." She laughed unevenly and pointed to Ned. "This is my pet doctor, Charlie. I like him because he's so inhuman. But once he kissed me in a moment of weakness

and then he looked so disgusted with himself I had to laugh."

"That's right, rub it in," said Ned. He didn't add that he had been sore with himself because she had seemed so indifferent to his kiss.

Nina was becoming hysterical. "There with my father, I couldn't feel a thing. When Gordon died, all men died. Pay no attention to Ned, Charlie. He says to me, "Give up nursing. Marry someone. Have children. He says I'll never be really happy till then." She laughed feverishly and crawled up into Charlie's lap. "I want to feel something, Charlie. I want to feel. Oh, if you only knew how I've wanted to run home to you and confess everything. I've been bad, Charlie, playing the fool with men. But you don't hate me, Charlie, and you forgive me?"

Charlie soothed her. He felt triumphant. She had turned to him in her hour of trouble. He rocked her, back and forth, like a baby. He loved her in his strange way. So he counseled her now to marry Sam Evans.

"You sound so like Father," Nina said, "and you've been talking to Ned. Sam is a nice boy and perhaps what I feel for him is love, normal, healthy love. To be a wife, to have children, to build around me a home. Perhaps that is what I've been seeking, Charlie."

She snuggled down into his shoulder and fell asleep. Charlie, poor old Charlie, was happy. When Sam returned from the drug store, he told him he had reason to hope for Nina's love. Sam was pathetically grateful. Ned Darrell stayed silent, watching her.

Nina looked at herself in the mirror. She was young, she was beautiful. Was she going to allow herself to be cheated of all happiness? "No, no," she told herself. She would take life and happiness where she found it

"Love mustn't enter into this," said Nina, and Ned agreed. But their eyes met, and her hands were in his hands. Outside the snow fell steadily

Life wasn't going to let Nina Leeds off as easily as that.

They were married in a little country church in the springtime, Sam and Nina, and for their honeymoon they went back to visit Sam's mother. It was a lovely old farm, miles away from anywhere, on which Mrs. Evans lived, with a queer old house which Nina decided was haunted, judging from the creaks and groans and sighs she heard around the place at night.

Nina had never been happier. Sam was so sweet and simple. They romped about together like young colts. Only one thing disturbed Nina. That was Mrs. Evans' evident desire to get her alone, which she finally succeeded in doing by sending Sam on a long errand. The old lady came quickly to the point.

"You love my boy, don't you? I hope the two of you will go on being happy together, just the two of you."

"We don't." Nina was triumphant. "Sam and I are hoping that someday there'll be three of us. I'd love to have a child beyond everything. We both would."

"I know, but you can't." The old woman stared fiercely at Nina. "It's because I want Sammy and you, too, to be happy. You just can't." Just then Nina heard through the house the ghostly laughter she had heard during the night. Mrs. Evans clutched at her wrist. "That's my husband's sister, Sammy's Aunt Bessie," she whispered. "Hasn't been out of her room in years. It's the family secret and now you're one of the family. My husband's mother died in an asylum, her father before her. It's gone on and on. It's the curse of the Evanses. If I hadn't had Sammy I'm sure my husband might have kept his mind. After Sammy came, we lived in fear, thinking any minute the curse might get him. It's been the work of my life keeping Sammy from knowing about this. But you see why you can't have children. I keep hoping you'll love Sammy like I loved his father, but be stronger than I was, and be satisfied with him alone."

Once more life was crashing down about Nina. "But I don't. I won't. I'll leave him." The girl was half frantic.

"You'd be a devil," said Mrs. Evans. "He'd go crazy sure then. Have you ever seen an insane person? Do you know what it means? I'm going to show you."

In her fury, she was too strong for Nina to resist. She dragged the trembling girl upstairs, through an unused attic, through a hidden doorway. A hideous old figure sat rocking back and forth in a chair, crackling merrily at a rag doll. Nina screamed with terror.

"That's what will happen to Sammy if you leave him," his mother cried. "I get down on my knees to you. Don't do that to my boy."

Once again Nina felt that she was being cheated, cheated of love, cheated of joy. Once again numbness stole over her soul.

"I'll stay," she said. "There's nothing else I can do. Oh, I wanted a son so much, I wanted a son so much."

The mother knew how the young wife was suffering. She had a daughter now to protect, as well as a son.

"Nina," she whispered. "I remember I used to wish I'd gone out deliberately in our first year without my husband knowing and picked a healthy male, same as we

do with stock, to give the man I loved a healthy child. Sammy has got to feel sure you love him to be happy. Whatever you do to make him happy is good, Nina, is good."

Their honeymoon had been in the spring. Winter found Nina and Sam back in her father's house because it offered them free rent, which was very important, since their money was dwindling and Sam was about to lose his job.

The swift happiness Nina had known at the time of her marriage was gone. She was thin again, neurotic and listless. She saw nothing whatsoever ahead to break the dreary monotony of her days. Charlie was still hanging around but he didn't matter to her any more than he ever had. In her innermost thoughts she knew now that she despised Sam, that she had never loved him save as a potential father for the baby she couldn't have. She was outwardly kind to him for he touched

Nina thought that she had never been happier since her marriage to Sam. They spent idyllic hours together on their honeymoon. Nina felt that Sam was so sweet and simple and normal that nothing could ever spoil their happiness

Nina wondered what she ought to do. She dared not leave Sam, dared not tell him the truth. But she knew now that she had never loved him, and that she loved Ned with all her heart and soul

the maternity in her, but poor blundering Sam sensed her true mood. It threw him into a panic of self-distrust and fear. He tried feebly, futilely, to make her happy with any little means that came to his command. Thus he came lumbering in one day to tell her he had invited Ned Darrell to visit them. Sam-like he didn't tell her until Ned was on his way from the station. Nina had barely time to dress and send Sam to market for the inevitable chicken before she was welcoming Ned on their doorstep. As his strong hands clasped

hers, she thought of Gordon, not weak Sam. She dragged Ned in eagerly, stood him beside the blazing fire, tried to act gay and sparkling. But she felt his cool, keen eyes upon her, reading behind the mask of her face, recognizing without words that her marriage was wrong.

"Aren't you getting yourself engaged to some fair lady or other?" She asked the question mockingly.

"Not on your life. Not till I'm thirty-five at least." Even the tones of his voice were strong tones.

"Then you don't believe in taking your own medicine. Think how much good it would do you to have a nice girl to love, whose character you could shape, whose life you could guide. And you ought to have a baby, Doctor. You will never know what life is, you'll never really be happy until then, Doctor."

Ned's amazingly direct glance met hers. "I recognize my arguments. Was I wrong on every point, Nina? Tell me about it. I feel responsible."

Nina sank down on the sofa before the fire, pulled Ned down beside her. It was too late for help but she had to talk. "I warn you it isn't a pretty case history but I hope it will teach you not to be so cock-sure in the future," she said. And then she told Ned the Evans' secret and how she knew she must stick to Sam. "But I can't think it out for myself any more," she concluded. "I need your scientific advice this time, if you please. You must show me what is the truly sane thing I must do for Sam's sake and my own."

Ned's face was in the shadow. "Nina, a child would give Sam confidence in his own living. Naturally after what you've told me, it couldn't be Sam's child . . . the risk of hereditary insanity would be too great. But if Sam's wife knew that she could give her husband a sane, healthy child, as Sam's mother suggested, shouldn't she have this child?"

Nina could not remain still. She rose and walked restlessly about the room while Ned's deep voice continued.

"If it were someone for whom she cares nothing.

Nina was overwhelmingly glad to see Ned again, but she pretended not to feel any emotion. "Aren't you engaged yet?" she asked, with mock lightness. "Not on your life," he told her in his strong firm tones

Love mustn't enter into this, for it would destroy the happiness she is trying to create. . . ."

"She's afraid . . . afraid that's it's wrong. . . ." Nina whispered and the words seemed to catch in her throat.

Ned rose and stood beside her. "Wrong? Yes, but there's something more vital at stake. Either Sam's wife lets herself go to pieces mentally, morally, physically, sees her husband end up in an asylum, or she assures Sam's contentment, sanity and happiness."

Their eyes met, the strange eyes of Nina, the cool, intelligent eyes of Ned Darrell. Their hands met, trembling feminine fingers against firm, male hands. Outside the snow fell steadily, while within flames tossed showers of sparks up and down against the blackened fireplace.

Twice before Nina had thought she had known love, first with Gordon, then with Sam. Now she knew, as summer came singing down over the hills, as the child beneath her heart grew, that those earlier emotions had been the mere romantic attachments of a young girl. What she felt for Ned Darrell since that coldly scientific afternoon when she had held him to his doctor's pose and sent him away, proud of his will power, was beyond speech, beyond thought, all feeling, peace, happiness and joy. She seemed to live in an individual world, apart from Sam, apart from Charlie, in ecstasy with her unborn child and her thoughts of Ned.

They were all depending upon Ned now. They had moved to a bungalow beside the sea. Ned was going to find Sam a job. Ned was going to prescribe for

Sam was fatuously happy over the baby he thought was his. Charlie was congratulatory. "What fools they are!" thought Nina. "Oh, how could Ned treat me this way? I ought to hate him but I don't"

"I've given Sam enough of my life," said Nina. "This time I'm going to think of my happiness—and that means you and our child. The only thing sure is that we love each other, want each other. We must tell Sam the truth"

Charlie's sick mother. Ned, Ned, Ned. It was as though the blood turned to water in her veins at the very syllables of his name.

Nina saw him approaching the steps to the house and she sent poor Sam away, telling him he ought to shave. Ned was glowering. Nina cared for nothing but to get him alone. "Don't be cross," she begged.

"I'm not cross, Nina, but these triangular scenes are, to say the least, humiliating. I won't come here again."

Nina cried out. "Ned, I love you. I can't hide it, any longer. I won't. I love you, Ned." It was the first time that she had confessed it to him.

It caught Ned off-guard, swept him into the tide of her emotion. His arms enfolded her. "Nina, beautiful," he whispered, his lips against hers.

"At last, you've told me. You've confessed it to yourself. Oh, Ned, you've made me so happy."

"Nina, we're losing our heads." Panic welled up within the man. He would not love, he would not! He had a career to think of. He heard a step and whirled about gratefully. It was only Charlie.

Nina got rid of Charlie quickly, sent him upstairs to find Sam. She would recapture that flaming moment.

"I've lost everything in life so far because I hadn't the courage to take it," she whispered. "I've hurt everyone around me. This time I'm going to think of my happiness—and that means you and our child. I've given Sam enough of my life. And it hasn't made him happy, not the least bit. So what's the good? How can we really know that his thinking our child is his would do him any good? We can't. The only thing sure is we know we love each other. The time for honesty has come. We must tell Sam the truth." She heard her husband coming and turned to him. "After lunch we want to have a long talk with you, Sam. Don't we Ned?" She could not trust herself to remain in the room after that. She ran out, pretending she had to look after the cooking.

Simple Sam turned to Ned. "What did Nina mean, you want to talk to me? Or is it a secret?"

NINA LEEDS AT FORTY-FIVE

● One of the most amazing things about "Strange Interlude" is the way in which the changes in age of the characters are shown. Norma Shearer and Clark Gable had to take about twenty make-up tests to determine what lines in their faces would photograph most naturally. In this scene Norma wears a wig. That middle-aged look is achieved by the use of a lot of eye shadow as well

● "Strange Interlude" marks a great advance in talking picture technique. You not only hear what the characters are saying in this picture; you know what they are thinking about. Their lips do not move while their thoughts are revealed; but you know what is going on in their minds. This is the way it was done. The scenes were made two separate ways. First M-G-M made a sound track, and the characters spoke their thoughts along with their regular lines. Then the cameramen photographed the scene. The actors spoke their lines but remained silent during the thought intervals, reacting to them as a record of the thought was played back. On the stage it was impossible to do this, and people found it hard to tell which were supposed to be the spoken words and which the thoughts. The pictures have found a new technique. When you see this scene, for instance, you'll know not only what these two lovers were saying but what they were secretly thinking. Norma Shearer and Clark Gable as

NINA LEEDS AND DARRELL

Young Gordon shrank away from Ned. "I hate you," he said. "I hope I never see you again"

Ned Darrell gazed at him, his childish features, his weak, impotent hands. He couldn't, he couldn't tell the truth. It was impossible to hurt any human being that much. Swiftly he made his decision.

"Look here, Sam," he said. "I can't stay for lunch. I've got a million things to do. I'm sailing for Europe in a few days. . . ." Sam tried to interrupt him but he hurried on . . . "and now for your secret. It ought to make you very happy, Sam. Nina will be furious with me. She was saving it to surprise you." He watched the other's guileless face. "You're going to be a father, Sam. And now I've got to run. You won't be able to get me as I'll be away, visiting until I sail. I've already said goodbye to Nina. Tell her I expect to find you both happy in your child, both of you. Tell her that."

He rushed out. Sam hardly saw him go. He sank to his knees. "Why did I doubt her?" he thought. She's loved me right along. Oh, God, I thank thee."

Nina, entering, stopped at sight of him. She was transfixed with joy. "Ned told me the secret—that we're going to have a child," he cried.

"Ned," cried Nina. "Where is Ned?"

"He's gone—gone for a year."

"A year?" The girl's voice was shrill. "I've got to see him. I'll telephone him. I'll go into town right away . . ." she ran out wildly.

Sam ran after her. "He said we couldn't reach him. He's visiting out of town until he sails. Why, is it so important?"

Nina staggered back. Once more love had deserted her. Gordon had died, rotted away, but Ned had sneaked off, crawled away from passion, hidden away like a coward. She started to tell Sam. She wanted to make Sam hate Ned as she hated Ned.

"Ned lied . . ." she started.

Sam stammered. "You're not going to have . . ."

She saw his face. One didn't hurt little boys. "Oh, yes I am. Nothing can keep me from that. But you're . . . not . . . I mean . . ." she couldn't go on. She couldn't face the truth without Ned. She couldn't hurt Sam. She couldn't do anything but go on and go. She couldn't do anything but stay silent.

He was a really beautiful baby. He was Nina Leeds' fourth love. Now she really knew happiness. And Sam knew happiness, too, and a swift self-confidence that was rapidly carrying him up in the world of business. When the boy was five months old, they were still living in the seashore cottage but it was a home now, and Sam strode about, as fatuous as any other fond father. Charlie found his cockiness almost beyond endurance. He didn't see anything wonderful in the baby. It was just like any other baby. So, by way of being disagreeable, he talked of Ned Darrell, whom he had met in Munich that summer, about the lovely

women Ned had been with, about how Ned was never going to return to America.

And then as if to make a liar of Charlie, the doorbell rang and Nina called downstairs, "Who is it?" and a voice answered, "It's I, Nina, Ned Darrell."

In that instant she knew she still loved him. In that instant she knew she had loved him utterly from the moment her son had been placed in her arms, and in her first glance at him now, somewhat worn, somewhat dissipated, she knew that he, too, loved her. Charlie watched them, his old suspicions aroused. He began talking at once of the baby, of Sam's success and of the wonderful father Sam made. He made both Nina and Ned nervous and their fear of his possible knowledge was in both their minds as they stood alone in the nursery side by side looking at their sleeping son.

Ned's voice was desperate. "It's been torture, Nina, being away. I couldn't forget you. Other women—they only made me love you more. It was always you in my arms. Nina, I love you so." He held her close to him.

"Oh, Ned, why did you run away?"

"I was a fool," said Ned. "I thought of Sam. I thought of myself and my career. The time for lying is over. You've got to come away with me. Sam's got to give you a divorce."

Nina flushed. "Sam would give his life for my happiness. But it would mean his life. I'm not your old mad Nina. I always will love you. But now I love my baby, too. His happiness comes first."

"But he's mine, too. If you don't come away with me, I'm going away. I'll never come back again"

Nina was suddenly calm, sure of herself, sure of him. "Oh, yes, you will," she said. You can't get me out of your blood any more than I can forget you. If you go away, you'll only come back again. You can't fight it. I can't fight it."

"You think I'll stay on those terms?" Ned was half savage with hurt and anger. "I can smash your calculating game for you. I can tell Sam."

As he slammed out of the nursery, he met Sam at the top of the stairs, friendship shining from his eyes, affection in his handclasp.

"Ned has something he wants to tell you, Sam," said

Nina presided over Gordon's birthday party. She was beautifully gowned, and seemed serene and poised, but actually she was seething with emotion. "I am not worthy of Ned," she thought. "I lied to our son about our love"

Nina. She saw Ned whiten, stammer. The moment of danger came and passed. She knew Ned couldn't go through with it. Their secret was safe for all time. Triumphantly she led the way downstairs, looked at Charlie, Sam, Ned.

"My three men," she thought. "Their life is my life, husband, love, father and the fourth man, little man, little Gordon. He is mine, too. That makes it perfect."

The years dealt kindly with Nina Leeds Evans. They dealt successfully with Sam Evans. He became rich and prosperous. The years made Gordon Evans into a sturdy, though strangely sullen young boy. He had one consuming hate, for his uncle, Ned. In fact, the appearance of this strange uncle spoiled his whole twelfth birthday party and made him viciously break the beautiful ship's model this uncle had given him into tiny bits.

Ned Darrell had grown used to his son's dislike. He had grown used to many things in these last few years.

"Perhaps Gordon feels, subconsciously, that I am his father," Ned explained to Nina, "his rival in your love. If he realized how little you love me anymore, he wouldn't bother. I used to hope Sam would break down. I'd watch him and read symptoms of insanity into every move he made. He only grew healthier. Now I watch him grow fat and I laugh. The joke has dawned on me. Sam is the only healthy one, we the lunatics. You and I have made a sane life for him out of our madness."

"Forget me, Ned," begged Nina. "Pick up your life as it was before I entered it. Carry on. Do really big things and make me proud of you."

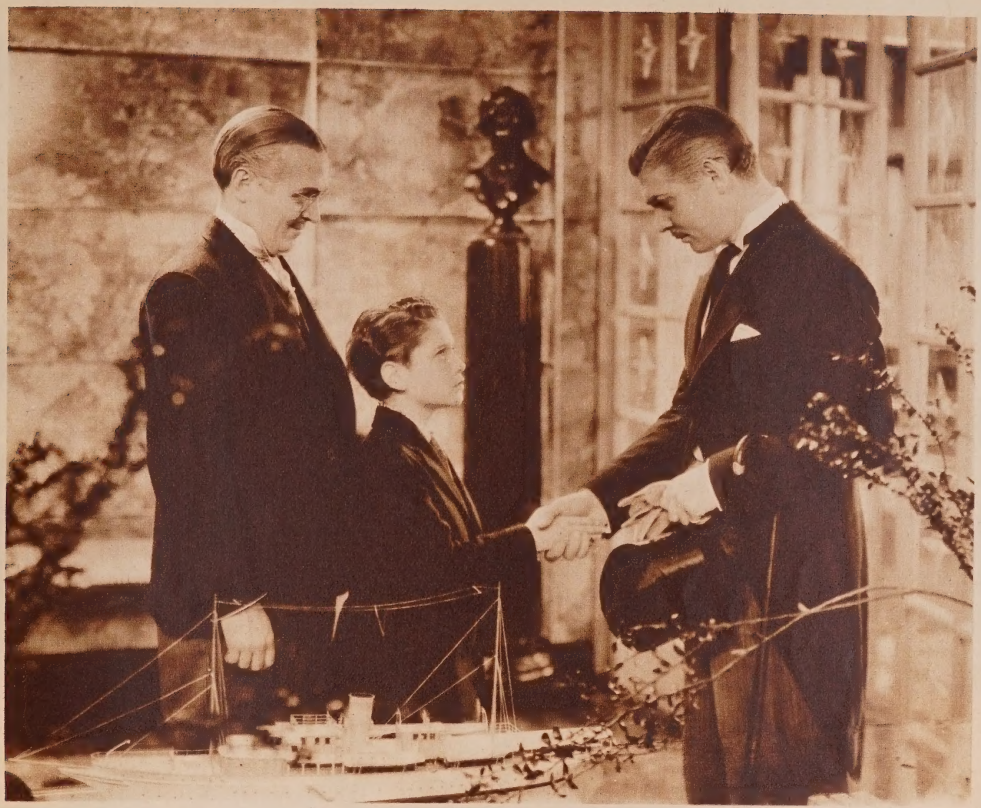
Nina embraced him and Ned knew that she was sending him away again. As he started to leave the penthouse apartment, young Gordon stopped him, his eyes blazing with hatred.

"I saw you kissing mother. It would serve you good and right, and mother, too, if I was to tell Dad on you."

Ned stopped beside the boy. "See here, son, there are things a man of honor doesn't tell anyone. There are things we don't tell, you and I."

As it happened it was Nina who told Sam about that

Nina Leeds, mature, wise, sophisticated, thought she knew what she wanted of life. She decided to sacrifice her lover to keep her son



Young Gordon greeted Ned coldly. He shook hands with him because he knew his father wanted him to. But he didn't trust him. He sensed that this man loved his mother

kiss. She said she had kissed Ned to get rid of him, to send him back to his work. She saw how happy this made Gordon. She also saw how complacently happy it made Sam. But then Sam was complacent and patronizing about everything and everybody, Charlie, wealth, Ned, their son, even herself.

Nina went through the birthday celebrations mechanically, beautifully gowned, apparently serene, but her thoughts were raging. "Oh, Ned," she thought, "dear generous Ned. I had to lie to our son against you. I'm not worthy of your love. Oh, grant my prayer that we may some day tell our son the truth, that he may some day learn to love his father." She looked up and saw the fatuous Sam and her mind became more bitter. "Oh! heaven grant that I may some day tell this fool the thruth," she thought.

Gordon was twenty-one. Gordon was in college. It was the day of the big boat race, Cornell and Navy, and Gordon was stroke. On the Evans' yacht were gathered Charlie, good old Charlie, Ned Darrell, Sam, Nina and Madeline Arnold. Nina and Gordon stood a bit apart from the others.

"I know I'll never be disappointed in you, dear," said Nina. "Everybody else may fail me, but never you. Oh, Gordon, I've got such high hopes, such plans."

"I know it. That's what makes it so difficult for me to tell you I'm planning to be married to Madeline this summer."

The shock was almost more than Nina could bear. So she was going to lose young Gordon, as she had lost everything else in life. Nina rushed to Sam telling him he must keep Gordon from marrying. Sam merely laughed at her. She rushed to Ned.

"I won't touch a life that has more than one cell," he said. "You've got to give up owning people, meddling in their lives as if you were God."

Nina was frantic. At last she would reveal the truth

Sam was dead. Ned was powerless to comfort Nina. "Have all our secret hopes led to this?" she asked bitterly

to Sam. But Sam was watching the boat race and wouldn't be bothered. She called Madeline Arnold to her, started to tell her. Ned foiled her there by telling the girl that Mrs. Evans was nervous and upset and she shouldn't pay any attention to anything she said. She called to Charlie. Only Charlie listened to her, only Charlie heard the whole pitiful story. But it was too late, for as the race, with its wild excitement, ended, Sam Evans dropped in a faint to the deck of the yacht and quietly expired of heart failure.

Nina Leeds Evans was old. She was almost alone. She was ready to bid her son and his bride goodbye. She was about to bid Ned Darrell goodbye, too, Ned Darrell, who had found himself once again in his work, and his biological experiments. Her son and Ned stood discussing Sam's will.

"There's one provision that concerns you, Dr. Darrell," Gordon said. "A half million for your station in the West Indies to be used for biological research. Your supervision is mentioned but I suppose whoever is in real charge down there will be only too glad to accept it."

Nina was suddenly angered. "You've said enough, Gordon."

The boy laughed cruelly. "I haven't said what I'm going to say, mother. I realize Darrell has acted like a contemptible rat." He struck out suddenly at the face of the man before him.

"Oh, Gordon," Nina cried. "You don't know what you're doing. You are hitting your father."

"That's all right son . . . all right . . . you didn't know," murmured Ned.

Gordon apologized. "I'm sorry. You're right, Mother. Dad would feel just as if I'd hit him. Please accept my apology, Darrell, won't you?" I want to say that I think you've both acted fine. I've known ever since I was a little kid that you were in love with each other. I hated the idea on Father's account but I knew

it was unfair, people can't help loving each other, any more than Madeline and I can help ourselves. So all I want to say is, now Dad's gone, I hope you get married and that you'll be happy."

Ned started to speak. "Listen, son, I've got to tell you . . ." but Nina stopped him.

"Go now, dear, to Madeline, give her my love," she said to Gordon.

They watched the boy dash away, they watched him in his plane mounting high in the sky, and when the rush of the motors was making a noise above which no one could hear Ned Darrell called, "Goodbye, Gordon. You're my son, Gordon. You're my son."

And then he, too, rushed away, leaving Nina standing in the garden.

"He's gone," cried Nina. "My eyes are growing dim. Ned—where's Ned. Gone, too. And Sam is gone. Why—why they're all dead. Where's father and Charlie."

Charlie spoke. He had entered the garden softly with roses in his arms. "I'm here, Nina."

Nina rested her head on his shoulder. "I'm so contentedly weary of life," she whispered.

"Rest, Nina," said Charlie. "It's been a long day." He was very happy. He had passed beyond desire and he had all the luck at last.

Nina was old. She was almost alone. Nearly everyone had deserted her, except Charlie, her old friend. "Rest, dear Nina," he said. "It's been a long day"

MRS. IRVING THALBERG

ONE OF HER MANY ROLES

● Norma Shearer is one of the most sophisticated women on the screen. Off screen she is Mrs. Irving Thalberg, wife of the famous M-G-M producer. She is one of the world's best dressed women. But clothes bore her to death, she says. She loves molasses cookies, her husband, and swimming.

NORMA SHEARER: HER LIFE

BY ALICE DELMAR

● She walks in her sleep, bites her finger nails, and her feet are always cold. And yet she is the most poised woman on the screen today. She's Norma Shearer, star of "The Divorcée," "Strangers May Kiss," "Private Lives," and "Strange Interlude." Only her little nervous giggle betrays her, revealing the woman underneath all that glitter.

She has brown wavy hair and blue eyes, and she's partial to small hats.

Norma is always being held up as a model for the American girl to follow. She looks, she acts, she speaks like a typical modern American girl. But she isn't. She was born in Canada.

Because Norma Shearer has gotten everything in life that she wanted the legend has grown about her that she was born with a silver spoon in her mouth. Nothing could be farther from the truth.

She was born in a suburb in Montreal, Canada, on August 10, 1903. She came of an average middle class family. Their home at 507 Grosvenor Avenue, Westmount, was just the sort of cozy two-story home that one might live in anywhere. Norma's mother was directly descended from the Reverend H. C. Cooper, who preached the first sermon in the Humber River country in 1848. Norma's father, Andrew Shearer, was an executive in a lumber company.

There were three children in the family—Norma, her sister Athole, and her brother Douglas.

Norma and her sister went to public school in Montreal and to the Westmount High School. They were regarded by the other girls with a sort of unholy awe, because they were the leaders in all sorts of pranks.

The only time Norma Shearer ever appeared on the stage as a child was when she was five years old. Then she was one of several dozen snow fairies in an amateur pageant.

At fourteen Norma suddenly blossomed out. She was pretty and she was popular. She and her sister Athole were too young to go out yet, but boys were allowed to come to their home in the evenings. Norma had a lot of young beaux, but she wasn't crazy about any particular one. Athole would grow starry-eyed over the one she had a crush on at the moment. When Norma giggled, Athole would say, "But everybody falls in love."

"Not I," said Norma. "I'm going to be a movie actress."

So far Norma's life had been pretty rosy. And then suddenly disaster came upon the family. Norma's father failed in business. It wasn't his fault, but the effect of the War upon business. Nevertheless, it left them all stranded.

"We must do something about this," said Norma, lifting her chin in the air.

"Yes, we must," echoed Athole. "But what?"

It was Norma who conceived a plan that made them all gasp. Why, it was impossible, preposterous. They

Glamorous Norma Shearer with Louis B. Mayer, M-G-M executive, and Irving Thalberg, her husband, attending a big premiere in Hollywood. That's Irving Thalberg at the right

In the good old days Norma was always the sweet, clinging heroine. She clung to John Gilbert in "He Who Gets Slapped" when John was the Great Lover of his day. This picture was taken in 1924

Which do you like better—Norma as a sweet simple heroine or Norma, the glittering sophisticate? When she appeared with Lon Chaney in "Tower of Lies" she hadn't gone sophisticated yet

●

couldn't leave Canada and go to New York. How could they face a strange city, broke as they were? They were totally inexperienced. How could they get work in the movies, as Norma suggested?

But in the end Norma and her sister and mother left for New York. They found a room in an inexpensive boarding house on 59th Street at Ninth Avenue in New York. Here they ate their meals out of paper bags from the tops of their trunks.

Then Norma and her sister started out on their weary round of the studios. They had no friends. They knew no one in the theatrical business. They had no entree to the studios. In vain they pounded on studio doors. Casting directors grew tired of shooing them away.

For six months they almost starved. Norma bravely

●

BACK IN THE

Norma Shearer has never been afraid to disguise her good looks for the sake of realism. She made herself up to look like this in "His Secretary," back in 1925

●

cooked soup over a gas jet. But she kept her chin up. At the end of six months they were desperate. Norma's mother counted over what was left of the tiny budget they had started out with, and suggested that they all go back to Montreal. Sister Athole wavered. She, too, thought it was best to go back, even if they did have to admit defeat. But not Norma. She had made up her mind to get into the movies.

They had to move in to an even cheaper room, a little hall bedroom, where they had to wash their clothes in the bath tub.

Day after day the two sisters tramped from one studio to another. The soles of their shoes wore thin, and they had to slip cardboard into them to protect the soles; but Norma's courage never wore thin.

One day as they sat in the outer office of a studio a woman who had been in the game for years took pity on them.

●

Here's when Norma first began to go sophisticated. It was for "Lady of the Night," one of her first big successes

GOOD OLD DAYS

Above, Oscar Shaw with Norma in "Upstage" in 1926.

No actress pays more attention to her fan mail than Norma Shearer. She and her secretary go very carefully over the letters she receives, and between them they read every one of them

"Why don't you go to a booker?" she asked.

They knew so pitifully little about the picture game that they didn't even know what she meant. She told them that a booker was a man who got jobs for people, and she gave them the address of one.

Very early the next day the two girls entered the booking agent's office. A tired looking young man glanced up at them and asked them what in the world they wanted. They explained that they wanted to go into pictures. He told them to report to a comedy company that afternoon. Norma and her sister were elated, because they were sure that now at last they had jobs.

There are just as many fans who adore the memory of the sweet, lovely Shearer of "The Student Prince" with Ramon Novarro as there are fans who worship the sophisticated Shearer of today

It was work and hard work that put Norma Shearer where she is today. In 1928 she was working hard in such pictures as "The Actress", with O. P. Heggie, giving her fans what they wanted

But when they called that afternoon at the studio they found a long line of girls. The studio needed twelve girls for one of their scenes, and forty had been sent down. Norma watched the assistant director scan the long line of girls and pick out one by one the prettiest ones. Norma's heart sank. There were too many beautiful girls there for her to attract any attention. Norma saw the assistant director choose eleven of the prettiest girls. She knew that he would only pick one more, and he hadn't even glanced in her direction. She had to think and think quickly. She must, she *must* attract his attention. Norma coughed. The assistant

"The Divorcee" was one of Shearer's greatest box-office triumphs. In it she played a woman who lost the man she loved, and tried to find happiness in other affairs. Here you see her in a love scene with Chester Morris

Her work in "The Divorcée" in 1930 won Shearer the golden statue of the American Academy of Motion Picture Arts for the best acting by a woman during the year. Conrad Nagel presented the statuette to her

director glanced her way. She smiled fetchingly, apologetically. Her smile lit up her whole face. "All right, sister, you'll do," the man said.

But Norma didn't want to get a break that Athole didn't share with her. She waited till all the other girls were gone. Then she cornered the assistant and persuaded him to use Athole as well as herself.

That job — Norma's first — lasted three days. Then for three weeks they couldn't get work. But now when casting directors asked them sourly, "Have you had any experience?" Norma would look up triumphantly and say yes. In that way she managed a little extra work. Once she even got a leading lady part in a Western at a salary of one hundred dollars weekly. The job lasted exactly a week. Then she went back to extra work again. In the meanwhile the more romantic Athole fell in love with and married a New Yorker, John Ward. That left only Norma and her mother to struggle through this unhappy time. Norma now trudged to the studios alone.

One day she finally got in to see David Wark Griffith, the greatest director of that time. He took one look at Norma and shook his head. "You'll never be able to photograph well," he told her. "You're wasting your time trying for a career in pictures."

Norma cried that night in her dark bleak little hall bedroom. He was a famous director. She was just an extra girl when she could get extra work to do. He must be right. But there was something in her that was greater than faith—there was a courage that nothing could break down. She would go on.

She went on. She got bits to play. And finally came leading lady roles in "The Stealer" and "Channing of the Northwest." Norma was good in them. There was in them all the promise that was to be realized several years later in such pictures as "Strangers May Kiss," "Private Lives," and now "Strange Interlude."

There was at that time at Universal a young manager named Irving Thalberg. He was scouting for new talent. When he saw those pictures he jotted down in a little red notebook—"Norma Shearer—The Stealer and Channing of the Northwest. Interesting possibilities."

He didn't know it, of course, but his destiny and hers were being written down in that little red book. When Irving Thalberg was switched to the Metro Studios, he sent to New York for Norma Shearer.

Metro signed Norma up for a few months with options. If she was a success she would stay. If she was a failure she would go back. Norma didn't even have the train fare to Hollywood at the time. The company paid that.

When Norma arrived at the depot she expected to be greeted like a star. But no one met her. Not a soul. Norma and her mother put up at a little hotel for the night, and the next day Norma went to the studio that had signed her up.

In the reception room was a young, good looking man. "Irving Thalberg is expecting me," Norma told him. She was determined to impress this young, good looking office boy. He led her at once into a sumptuous office. Norma, in telling the story says, "I recall distinctly a mischievous twinkle in his eye as he closed the door behind me. I was somewhat dismayed when he calmly strolled over to massive desk and sat down, cocking his feet on top. Without saying a word, he sat there and eyed me impersonally for some moments. I thought he was rather impertinent. Imagine my embarrassment to discover him to be the general manager of the company."

Shearer says today that she fell in love with the impertinent office boy at first sight. She saw him many times after that at story conferences, but he gave no sign that she was anything to him but an actress on his payroll.

Norma, who had looked forward to stardom, found herself being relegated to small roles. She would go down to Thalberg's office and storm about it. She felt other girls were getting the roles she deserved. She fought for them. But Thalberg didn't yield an inch. Even her tears didn't move him.

For two years she worked and struggled. All this

Shearer changed her type, she changed her hair, she changed her soul for talking pictures. She saw that fans were demanding a new type of actress. In one of her earliest talking pictures, "Let Us Be Gay," she forecast the modern woman, brittle, sophisticated, gallant

time she was falling more and more in love with this young executive. If he was falling in love with her, he gave no sign. He called her formally "Miss Shearer." She always addressed him as "Mr. Thalberg."

Norma was making progress now—progress with her career—but she wasn't happy. How could she be when she was so much in love and they couldn't seem to get over the Mister and Miss stage?

About three years after she came to the Metro studios, Norma Shearer, through her own untiring work, won stardom. Her first starring picture was "Slave of Fashion," followed by "His Secretary," "The Devil's Circus" and many others.

But success in pictures was no longer enough for the new Norma. She was no longer the young girl who had cried, "Fall in love? Not I. I'm going to be too busy being a motion picture actress."

"All this time," says Norma, "I knew that we were both in love. Irving might not have realized it then. But I knew it very well. He was a business lion but a social lamb."

So what did Irving Thalberg, the mighty executive, do when he wanted a date with this slip of a girl? He had his secretary call her up and relay an invitation to attend the opening of a picture the following evening with him.

Norma felt like replying, "Why don't you speak for yourself, Irving," but she didn't dare. She accepted at once. Their first date took place three years after Norma first met Irving. They were married September 29, 1927.

Norma's first great success was achieved in silent pictures. When the talkies came in, many stars toppled from their thrones. Norma was shrewd enough to see what was happening. She knew that public taste was changing. She had always played sweet innocent heroines. Now she would try something else!

It was at this time that Bayard Veiller suggested Norma for "The Trial of Mary Dugan." Metro executives gasped. What, the lovely, elegant Shearer play a murderess and a woman of easy morals? They wouldn't hear of such a thing. Norma pleaded for the role. Her bosses were adamant. So one evening when the studio was deserted she rounded up a crew and secretly took a test for the picture. The next day she ran off the film before a group of M-G-M executives. They heard it in amazement. Norma Shearer *was* Mary Dugan. From that day on Norma could be anything that she and the public wanted her to be. She turned out one sensational box-office hit after another—"The Last of Mrs. Cheney," "The Divorcée," and "Let Us Be Gay."

Another woman as successful as Norma would not have taken any chances with her popularity. But Norma, though she loved the movies, knew that

Shearer was still the modern woman, but there was a hint of something new in her acting in "A Free Soul." The tenderness and depth of the new Shearer were hinted at in her love scenes with Leslie Howard

there was something greater than being a successful actress, and that was being a woman and a mother. She retired temporarily from pictures. When Irving Thalberg, Jr., was born, newspapers all over the country carried Norma's picture and under it the caption: "Norma Shearer Plays Her Greatest Role."

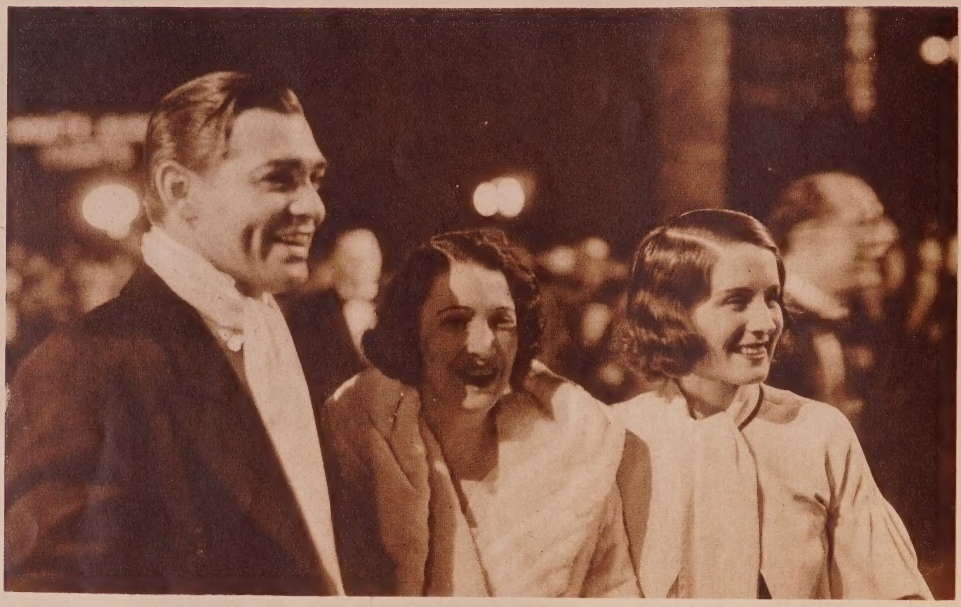
And they were right. Norma Shearer since then has gone on from one triumph to another, but she still thinks that her young son is her best performance.

Norma Shearer lives today in a beautiful French provincial home with a swimming pool in the front of the house. She's crazy about tennis, swimming and horseback riding. She has tea every afternoon at four, and she loves yeast sandwiches, of all things. But she still keeps her original dressing room, because she believes it brought her luck. Just before she begins a new picture, she always apears at the studio in tears, saying she cannot possibly play the part. Life has never been a bed of roses to Shearer, and she's glad of it.

"Writers," she said recently, "in telling of the lean days when I was beginning, call those times 'Hardships'! They were not hardships. I never think of them as such. They were Adventures. They were life. I wouldn't give those days up for all the treasures of the earth. Such appreciations as I have, whatever warmth or color or sympathy I possess, my joy in my own life, my husband, my son, my home, whatever of quality or vitality I give to my work I owe to my 'Past.' "

Wise, gallant Shearer.

Norma, as Nina Leeds, the most daring of all women she has played. In this role is realized that new Norma that was just hinted at in "A Free Soul"



CLARK GABLE: HIS STORY

●

BY VAL LEWTON

Author of Clark Gable's next starring vehicle, a picture based on the novel, "No Bed of Her Own."

● Women made Clark Gable what he is to-day. Quickly — before any evil-minded persons should think him one of that dancing fraternity which batten on the adoration of silly females — I must add that by women I mean women in the mass. For it is upon the variable taste of women theatre-goers that Gable's tremendous popularity is based.

Women like him. This seems, at first blush, the only explanation of his phenomenal rise in popularity. Yet there are other factors which have brought Clark Gable to the front as a leading man.

It seems as if the riddle of Clark Gable's appeal is a topic of discussion wherever two or more "fans" are gathered together. Unlike most motion picture mysteries, this mystery of Gable's popularity is puzzling even to the men who make and guide the careers of the stars in Hollywood. None of them know in which pigeon-hole to place this young man. Clark does not fit into any established niche. He has the chameleon-like personality which is the distinguishing mark of the great actor. This makes him hard to place.

In February, 1931, they said that he would start a new vogue as the gentleman gangster. That was after he had played the suave sophisticated, death-dealing Jake Luva in "Dance Fools, Dance."

In March it was decided that he would probably be a leading character man. That was after he had appeared as the young newspaper reporter, with a flair for comedy, in "The Secret Six."

In June, they changed their minds about him and predicted that he would be a straight "heavy," a villain with enough appeal to play havoc in feminine lives until the hero could put a stop to his activities. That was after he had played Ace Wilfong in "A Free Soul."

In September, it was generally agreed that he would probably fall into the leading man class. That was after he had played opposite Greta Garbo in "Susan Lenox."

In October, he was discovered as a new he-man, a youthful Wallace Beery, a roughneck among roughnecks, who belonged in the wide open spaces rather than in flower-filled drawing rooms. That was when he zoomed across the screen as one of the rough-and-ready naval air men in "Hell Divers."

In December, they predicted, in rather gasping, weak

(Opposite at left) Clark Gable laughs off rumors of a divorce, and to prove it, attends a Hollywood premiere with Mrs. Gable and Norma Shearer. That's Norma at the extreme right

Clark Gable in two scenes from "Hell Divers". Above he's with Marjorie Rambeau telling her how to get her man. The fans demanded Clark Gable in a he-man role, and he gave them the stuff they cried for

They're pals both off and on the screen—Clark Gable and Wallace Beery. They're both regular guys and there's nothing they like better than a good hunting or fishing trip

voices, that, at last, they had found the niche for him, the place reserved for handsome heroes. That was after they had seen him with Joan Crawford in "Possessed," when he played a successful, charming man-of-affairs, politician, and candidate for governorship.

In February, 1932, they threw up their hands in bewilderment and announced that, after all he was a romantic hero. That was when he played the ardent, young clergyman, who gives up his church and his family for love, in "Polly of the Circus" with Marion Davies.

What will happen when audiences see him as the doctor in "Strange Interlude," no one knows. He has blown guesses and predictions and prophecies to the four winds so long now, that no one dares to venture an opinion. And still he refuses to be catalogued. When they pin a label on him and put him safely away, he has to be taken out and placed somewhere else.

The diversity of Clark Gable's various roles on the screen are only to be matched by the roles he has played in real life. Studying the various full book-length biographies which has been written about him in the single year of his popularity (such is fame in this rapid-fire age!) one is constantly impressed by the swiftness with which he has passed from one strange milieu to another. He has been, in his time, stage actor, farm boy, checker in a rubber factory, oil driller, surveying lineman, clerk, an advertising salesman, and finally the biggest box-office attraction of the present day screen. Change is so constant a factor in American life that to record these various occupations in no way stresses the abruptness with which he passed from one to another. One must go on to explain that as a farm boy coming for the first time to Akron to get a job and go to night school, Clark Gable was the very beau ideal of a rube, as much a yokel as any of the adolescent characters the cartoonist Briggs delighted in portraying.

Gable, himself, laughs when he tells how he first came to Akron. It amuses him now to remember what a raw-boned, awkward, country boy he was when he first made contact with the larger city. He had been born in Cadiz, Ohio, and had spent his youth in Hopedale, a small town of that same state.

"It was late in the afternoon when I landed in Akron," he says, describing the incidents of his arrival, "I had arranged to meet two other boys from Hopedale in the station. My train reached there an hour before their train did. That hour in that strange station was one of the longest in my life. After all I was only sixteen and it was my first trip away from home.

"The three of us found rooms at the hotel and spent the evening wandering around the town. Not one of us would confess to the others that he was scared to death. It had been easy and thrilling to talk about going out on our own, but it was a pretty serious business to be there.

"The next day I got a job as a timekeeper in a big rubber factory, The other boys found similar work and we all left the hotel for rooms in private families. I

let everyone think that I was twenty years old and I earned the huge salary of one hundred dollars a month. That was the largest salary I was to earn for many a year.

"I hadn't forgotten my plan to study medicine and I enrolled immediately in the night school of the University of Akron, taking "pre-med" courses. It was our plan to go to night school until we had saved enough money to enter the regular university classes.

"At that time Akron boasted a very popular stock company. Every week, when I did not have classes in the evening, I went to the theatre. It fascinated me. Now and then, I'd see one of the actors on the street and they seemed wonderful people from another world. I was only seventeen and working in a rubber factory all day, and going to school five nights each week makes you hungry for a little excitement and glamour.

"One evening I happened to sit at the same table in a restaurant with two boys from the company. We drifted into a casual conversation, that is, I pretended that it was casual while I was so excited that I could scarcely eat, and they invited me to go back stage with them.

"That evening I spent in the thrilling places behind the footlights instead of in a class room. And that evening I decided that I'd rather be an actor than a doctor or anything else in the world.

"From that time on I hung around the theatre as much as possible. I met all the members of the company and spent long hours visiting with them, listening to the stories of their travels and experiences. Finally

The fans don't know whether they like Clark Gable better as a he-man or as a great lover, but they all said he was great in his scenes with Joan Crawford in "Possessed"

I mustered enough courage to ask the manager for a job.

"I got it. They made me a call boy without salary. But money meant nothing for me so long as I could be in the theatre. I kept my job at the rubber factory and gave up my night school without a moment's hesitation.

"Everything about that little theatre was filled with glamour. I was all eyes and ears, amazed at everything. But during those first few months I learned a valuable lesson, the unwritten code of the theatre, 'see and hear but say nothing.'

"Gradually I drifted into playing lineless parts. I walked on the stage as part of the mob or as a butler. I played every kind of a person with all kinds of make-up.

"I worked like mad during the days in order to earn enough money so that I could afford to have my nights at the theatre. I learned how to put on make-up and how to walk across the stage without falling over my own feet. I also learned to love the feeling of an audience on the other side of the footlights."

This phase of Clark Gable's career came to an end when his step-mother died. His father, Bill Gable, an oil driller who owned a drilling apparatus and worked on contract, decided to leave Ohio for the Oklahoma oil fields. He suggested that Clark come with him and learn the oil drilling trade. Loath as he was to leave the fringes of theatrical life in which he found himself, young Clark realized that his father, lonely since his wife's death, needed him. He went with him to Oklahoma and for a time worked side by side with him. But oil drilling was monotonous after the small taste of theatre life which had come his way.

Here's another scene from "Possessed," showing Clark Gable and Joan Crawford. They made a great hit both individually and as a team

Almost every actor who has ever played with Greta Garbo has shown awe and nervousness. Clark Gable was the first man who dared to dominate her. "Susan Lenox" was the picture. Hale Hamilton is the actor in the background

In "Susan Lenox" Clark Gable managed to hold one's admiration even while he portrayed a man who was going to the dogs. But that was nothing new for Gable. He'd played gansters and made women love them

Once again Gable was the dominating lover in "A Free Soul" with Norma Shearer. This is one of his best remembered gangster roles

A traveling road company went through the town in which the two Gables were working and with it went young Clark. This theatrical venture wound up in Portland, Oregon.

"I played everything from Romeo to Simon Legree," the actor says of this period in his life. "It was good training."

In Portland, with funds running low, Gable joined a cooperative venture, a theatrical troupe, all the members of which shared in both profits and expenses. One week Gable played fourteen shows and got exactly $1.30 as a reward for his ristrionic ability.

"At that, I was over-paid," he says.

With this rate of profit, the theatrical company could not long hang together. When it disbanded, Gable got himself a position in the advertising department of the Portland Oregonian. Then came another tour with a small theatrical troupe and he was again left stranded and penniless.

For a time he worked as a surveyor's linesman, as a collector for a telephone company and as lumberjack. While working for the telephone company, Clark met and married his first wife. Let him tell the story of the romance:

"At that time in Portland there was a successful Little Theatre which was producing some very good things. It was managed by a clever young woman who also conducted a sort of dramatic training school in connection with the playhouse. The old urge for the theatre was growing stronger and stronger. All my previous experience had been of the do-the-best-you-can school. Small as this Little Theatre was, its productions were carefully staged and its actors were drilled with as great care as if the preparations were being made for a Broadway first-night. It was a revelation to me. I worked all day in the telephone company, and then went every evening to the Little Theatre and worked twice as hard.

"The manager of the Little Theatre became my wife a few months later in Los Angeles. To her I owe a great debt of gratitude."

In Los Angeles, Gable found work on the stage. He was not even interested in pictures at that time. But before he could secure a stage role he had been forced to take "extra" work in pictures. It was his height which got him the job. He was one of a dozen uniformed guardsmen in a Lubitsch spectacle, standing rigidly at attention for hours on end.

With Jane Cowl as leading lady he played a minor part in her production of "Romeo and Juliet" as it toured the West Coast, and then came back to Hollywood to play another minor role in "What Price Glory." Here his luck broke for him. The man who played Sgt. Quirt left the company and Gable was cast in his place. It was the long noped-for opportunity. He did the most with it. His work attracted attention and there soon followed roles with Lionel Barrymore in "The Copperhead" and with Pauline Frederick in "Lady Frederick," and also a part in the West Coast stage production of "Madame X."

Between plays, Gable did "extra" work for many

pictures. He played with John Gilbert and Mae Murray in "The Merry Widow." The role was insignificant. Recounting his experiences to a friend, Gable said:

"My part was so slight that my face appeared on the screen for barely a second, but that second was enough to convince me that I would never do as a film actor. I looked big, awkward and it seemed to me that my ears covered at least half the area of the screen."

He played with Nancy Carroll in "Chicago," and when the show closed, Miss Carroll stayed on in Hollywood with a film contract while Gable, thoroughly convinced that he would never be a success on the screen, took a stock engagement in Houston, Texas, where he played for thirty-seven weeks in order to save up enough money to go to New York.

New York and the New York stage had been Gable's twin goals ever since the time in Akron when he first became an initiate in the world of the theatre. Coming into Pennsylvania Station, he was thrilled at the idea of at last being in New York. If he could get an engagement, he planned to stay on, but he hardly hoped for that. He had heard that New York was full of actors. If he could not get stage work, he could at least see the latest plays and enjoy himself as long as the money he had earned in Houston would last.

New York, it was true, was full of jobless actors, but Gable had gone far since his first experience in Akron, he was a good actor now. At least Arthur Hopkins thought so, for he cast him in the male lead of "Machinal," one of the best plays of the season in which it was produced. Gable's press notices on this play were glowing and he had no difficulty in finding parts when the play closed. He had featured roles in "Hawk Island," "Gamblin," and "Blind Windows."

"Sporting Blood" was another triumph for Clark Gable. It was an exciting horse race picture, with some beautiful love scenes between Gable and Madge Evans

He had hardly finished his part in the last-named play, when he received a call from Louis Macloon, a West Coast stage impressario. MacLoon wanted him to come back to Los Angeles and play Killer Mears in "The Last Mile."

Gable, who had divorced his first wife and had recently married the present Mrs. Gable, was loath to leave New York, but he had seen the play on Broadway and was anxious to see what he could do with the powerful leading role. He went back to California. With Gable as Killer Mears, the Hollywood production of "The Last Mile" was said to have been even better than the very successful Broadway version of this drama.

Lionel Barrymore, with whom Gable had played in "The Copperhead," saw the play. Barrymore was directing then and Gable appealed to him as a new and interesting personality for the screen. He suggested that the younger actor come and have a screen test made at the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer studios. Not thinking that the test would be successful, for he remembered the glimpses he had of himself on the screen as an "extra" player, Gable went and took the test anywhow. That was the last he heard from this studio for months.

In the meantime, a "heavy" was needed for "The Painted Desert." Gable was interviewed. The casting director asked him if he could ride. Gable insisted that he had ridden since childhood, and then went off and took lessons in riding. It was the first time he had ever been on a horse. Now horseback riding is his favorite diversion.

Following his part in "The Painted Desert," Gable was called to the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer studios. It was a result of the test he had taken so indifferently. Jack Conway, directing "The Easiest Way," and in search of

How that lad plays his love scenes! Here are two kinds of love from two different pictures. Above, tender worshipful love, the kind he felt for Susan Lenox. Below, the kind of love that takes what it wants, heeding no obstacles, love that is almost akin to hate. Do you remember this scene between Clark Gable and Norma Shearer in "A Free Soul"?

Women adore him. Men like him. There's been nothing like him since Valentino was the greatest lover of the screen. He had a terrific struggle for success, but now everything he wants is his for the asking. In "Strange Interlude" he achieves his greatest character portrayal

a leading man, had seen a test Barrymore made of Gable.

The actor's performance in "The Easiest Way" attracted so much favorable attention that he was immediately placed under contract by the Culver City studio. It was from this point on that he had his meteoric rise through the screen firmament.

Following his work in "Strange Interlude," and before beginning work in "China Seas," a story prepared especially for him by Tod Browning, almost every studio in Hollywood put in a bid to borrow him. He was loaned out to Paramount for one picture in which he will play with Miriam Hopkins.

It was Norma Shearer, I think, who once said to me during the course of an interview that she believed that screen success was a great education in itself. It has proven so in Gable's case. Those who saw the distinguished, collected young man who stepped out of his limousine to accept the plaudits of the crowd at the Hollywood world premiere of "Strange Interlude," would never have recognized the Clark Gable who came, bewildered and afraid, to his first job in Akron.

"He came up fast — how long will he last?" They are already asking this question. But it is a useless question. Gable, like Lewis Stone and other seasoned actors, has that strange ability to change with every role.

That "infinite variety" is a padlock to the security of his success. His popularity is not for the moment. It will last.